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A
VINDICATION
OF THE
English Stage,

Exemplified in the
Cato of Mr. Addison.

In a Letter to a Nobleman.
By Mr. Sewell.

— Who did ever in French Authors see
The Comprehensive English Energy?
Roscommon.

L O N D O N :

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Exemplified in the

Case of Mr. Addison

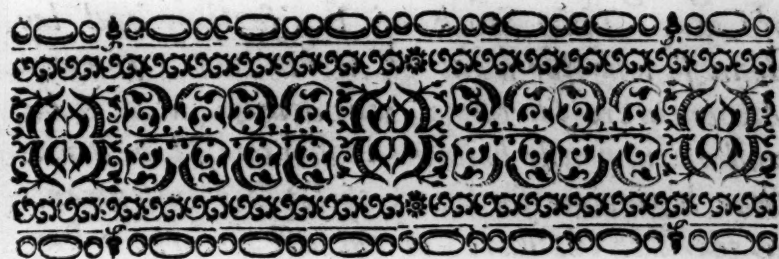
by Mr. Samuel
Johnson

The Complete English Dictionary
London

Printed by W. Johnston

1755

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THE PREFACE.

WHEN the Cato of Mr. Addison came abroad, all Persons seemed to be proud of a Performance which did so much Honour to their Country; Applause flowed in from every Quarter, Party was Dumb, and Criticism it self for some time sullenly silent. The Truth is, so ma-

ny Years had past since the English saw a Tragedy upon their Stage that deserved the Name of a Perfect Piece, that they could not contain from going into Raptures upon the appearance of Cato. That Stock of Praise that had lay dead so long for want of Merit in the common Adventurers for Fame, was drawn out at once, and unanimously bestowed upon one Man. It was then high time for Envy to set her Instruments at work to cut short, or retract so large a Payment, and truly the Dealers in Criticism did their Parts so very well, that they established the Reputation which they attacked. They gave Mr. Addison the only thing wanting to confirm good Judges in their first Opinion of his Work, and (as some body had expressed it) made themselves unwilling Witnesses to his Fame. It was not enough, that this Play was Translated into most of the living Languages, Acted, and Applauded all over Europe, it must have the Stamp of Impotent Criticism to make it Immortal. This the good Nature of our own Country supplied us with; for it had been a Shame and Reproach, unusual to these modest Times, for an English-man to have wrote a good Thing without being condemned by an English-man.

After this first Compliment was paid at home, there appears a doughty Second from abroad. It seems that one Monsieur de Champs had
got

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got into his Head, that he was able to write a Tragedy upon the Death of Cato, and so accordingly he sets about it, and after the manner of the French did his Work in a very little Time. It fell out unluckily for this Gentleman, that Mr. Addison had before chose this Subject, and therefore he had nothing else to do when his Play was wrote, but to secure himself by an After-game. This was easily done, by procuring a Critick to set his Performance above the English, a Task not difficult to a modest French-man. We have since seen this Performance upon our Stage, and the Death of Cato was scarcely ever less memorable than it was there. And now we have Tragedy and Criticism tacked together, like Man and Wife, for mutual Support, at the Price of One Shilling.

Altho' Monsieur de Champs is vain enough in his own Preface, yet he may be accounted Modest, in comparison with the Writer of the Parallel. There has never appeared a greater Mixture of Insolence and Ignorance in any thing of late Years, than in this pretended Criticism. He puts the greatest Affronts upon the English Genius imaginable, and treats our Understandings worse than Monsieur Sorbeire has our Manners and Education. He makes it a Question, whether we are capable of producing a good Tragedy, and then after making

us

us the Compliment of its being barely possible we should produce Cato's, as a Specimen of our Inability. After all this, he is so kind as to say, a good Word now and then of Mr. Addison, and with an Air of Authority, points out Corneille for him to copy, not without some Intimations, that is possible he may in some time write like a French Poet.

As soon as I had read this Pedantic Treatment of our Stage, I could not help returning some Contempt upon the Author in the following Letter. It is called the English Stage Vindicated, because this Critick has condemned that in general, and picked out Cato, which he owns our best Attempt in Tragedy, as a Proof of his Assertion. I know it is pleasing to the Ill-nature of some among us, to see any thing that offers to lessen the Value of the English Cato, and they are willing to espouse even this sorry Criticism, in Opposition to that excellent Performance. I do not envy these Gentlemen this Food for their Spleen, let them enjoy it till the French Stage produces another Monster for their Entertainment.

For my own part, as I was an early Admirer of Cato, I still continue such, and have not met with any Objection, upon the most strict Examination which has diminished the
Cha-

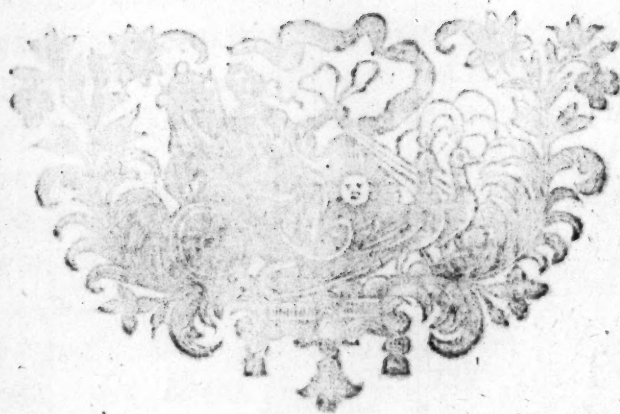
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Character of that Tragedy. My Pleasure is still the same, or greater in reading it, and I hope that this small Endeavour to justify the Opinion of the best Judges, as well as my own Taste, will not be accounted, disagreeable either to the Publick, or the Author of Cato, who needs no Defence.



THE PREFACE.

CHARLES, of the University of Cambridge, in the year 1753, published a small treatise on the subject of the human mind, which has since been translated into French, Italian, and Spanish. The author of this treatise, who was a distinguished philosopher and mathematician, has in this work given a clear and concise account of the human mind, and of the various faculties which it possesses. The work is written in a simple and easy style, and is adapted for the use of students in the universities. It is a valuable work, and one which every student of philosophy and mathematics should possess.



A

A
LETTER
TO A
NOBLEMAN.

Dear Will,

YOU must not wonder that I call
you a *Lord*, since it is now be-
come a Fashion among the *Cri-*
ticks to stick a Title of Quali-
ty at the top of all their Performances.
You must know these Criticks are an odd
sort of People that use the *Living* as ill
as they do the *Dead*, and when they have
writ something very silly, out of an abun-
dance of good Manners inscribe it to a
Lord. The Person who writ the *Parallel*
between the *English* and the *French Cato*,
having as wicked a Design to abuse *Peer-*
age as *Poetry*, resolved upon this Method,
B and

and accordingly has mounted a *foreign Journalist* into a Man of Quality, and degraded our best *English* Poet into a *Writer of Farce*. Would not you laugh to hear that *one* of his Lords *sells Books* in *St. James's Street* at *Paris*, another teaches School at *Amsterdam*, a *Third* *abridges Folio's* every Quarter, and deals as unmercifully with all the good Books that are Published, as the *Writer of the Parallel* has done with the *English Cato*? You remember in the *Rehearsal* *Parthenope's Mother* *sells Ale* by the *Town-wall*, and yet the Powers of Poetry can mount her into *Princesses*, but I did not know 'till now that the *Criticks* had the same Liberty.

Well: But I promised you to examine that Piece, and do my Part in vindicating the Honour of our Country from the Insults of this Pedant. You must allow me to do it in my own way, without talking of *Aristotle*, *Dacier*, and *Corneille*. Tell me truly then, does not the very Notion of *Cato's Character*, drawn by a *French-man*, shock you? Can a *Slave* breathe *Liberty*, or a *Bigot* think *sublimely*? A true *Cato* were the greatest *Satyr* in the World upon that *Nation*, as a false and ridiculous one is upon the present *Author*; and I think the Man chose wisely enough rather

rather to *Libel himself*, than his *Country*.

And yet, Sir, our *Critick* (what can't a *Critick* do?) has found Beauties enough in this *Play* to draw a *Parallel* between that and the *English*. I do assure you it is not one of *Sackeverel's Parallels*, for if the *Lines* are infinitely extended they will *never meet*, they will be always at an equal distance, the *English* always just, and sublime, the *French* always romantick and ridiculous. If there had been any *Similitude of Parts*, any *Likeness of Thought*, *Action*, or *Expression* that might have bore a *Comparison*, the *Writer* might have dignified the *Waste of his Time* by the *Name of Parallel*.

I believe, that upon *Examination*, we shall find the *French Play* to be rather a *Foil* to the *English* than to bear the *Honour of the least Competition* with *Mr. Addison's*. Beside, had it been much better than it is, I can't imagine what could be the *Motive for bringing it upon our Stage*, for he must have very little *Judgment* that could think that an *English Audience* would reverse their *Applauses* in *Compliment* to a poor foreign *Genius*, and a *Mock-Critick*. We are not to be dictated to from *Paris*, or have our *Tastes corrected* by the *Palate of a News-writer*. If this *Play* be

reckoned a Master-piece in *France* I desire to have no better Evidence of an entire decay of Spirit and Judgment, of a loss of Power to please in their Poets, and of Sense to distinguish in their Audiences. If honest *Boileau* were living, he would tell them another Story, and teach them not to venture the Glory of their Nation, and the Reputation of their Genius, upon such a trifling Performance as *Monsieur de Champs's*.

But to the Play it self, and here I shall take the Author's own Account of his Conduct of the *Drama*, which is absurd and ridiculous even to a Degree of Contempt, and yet he speaks of it with a Vanity natural to his Country. " Being in Possession, says he, of a *fine* Character, that of *Cato*, I cast about for Scituations that might exhibit in its full Extent, and Latitude; I have supposed that *Cato's* Daughter *Porcia*, who was nursed by *Crassus's* Wife, and liv'd with her near the Borders of *Parthia*, was after *Crassus's* Overthrow carried to the Court of *Arfaces Orodes*, and there Educated as that King's own Daughter; and he dying, she became Queen of the *Parthians*. By this means I bring it about, that She and *Cesar* are in Love with each other, for if she had known her self

" self to be *Cato's* Daughter, I could not
 " have given her that Passion for the a-
 " vow'd Enemy of her Father. Besides,
 " what a Surprize must it needs be to
 " *Cato* to see any of his Off-spring with
 " a Diadem! Such an Accident naturally
 " offer'd him Succours in Maintenance of
 " Liberty; but he thought it a Crime to
 " continue a Scepter in his Family, and
 " instantly resolves to make *Porcia* resign
 " the Crown.

This is *Monsieur de Champ's* Manner of
 setting forth his Performance. He cast a-
 bout for Scituations that might exhibit *Ca-*
to's Character in its full Extent and La-
 titude. Wretched Metaphorical Impertin-
 nence! But he has found a Scituation for
Cato's Picture, that gives the Figure a
 most unnatural Proportion, shews in it
 a wrong Light, and makes the whole
 Copy vastly unlike the Original. There
 is no Foundation at all in History for his
 wild Supposition of *Porcia's* being carried
 to the Court of *Arfaces Orodes*, and the
 second Part is still more extravagant of her
 being imposed upon the *Parthians* for
 their Queen. If the first could be admit-
 ted as a bare Poetical Probability, the se-
 cond is so contrary to common Sense and
 Reason, that it must disgust one at first
 View, it does not fall under the least Pretence
 to

to Probability, and therefore is an Absurdity in Nature, which no Poetical Privilege can justify. The Spectator cries out immediately,

Quaecunque ostendis mihi sic Incredulus Odi.

The French Author might very well say *I bring it about*, for the ordinary Rules and Circumstances to be observed in respect of Persons, Time, Place, and Action could never have *brought it about*. It is wholly the Off-spring of his own Imagination, entirely foreign to Truth and Probability, and though he calls it *Invention*, he does not seem to understand the Meaning and Import of the Word, or if he does he has grossly contradicted it. The Poet who adds some probable Circumstances to any great and well-known Action is said to *invent*, that is, though matters *did not fall out* in the Manner he has represented them, yet they *might have fell out so*, and the Addition of them to the main Action is to improve the Story, but still within the Bounds of Credibility. According to this *Horace* lays it down for a Rule, first that there is a *Publica Materies*, a Subject for any Poet to Work upon at his Choice, but in the Management of this he is to confine himself to a second and third Rule, which he expresses thus,

Aut

*Aut famam sequere, aut sibi Convenientia
finge.*

Now if a Man lays down or *invents* one Absurdity, then adds another to that, and make these Two productive of a Third, I desire to know whether he conforms himself to the Rules prescribed by *Horace*. For instance, The Supposition of *Portias* being carried to the Court of *Parthia* wants all the Circumstances of Probability and is therefore absurd, her being educated as a *Princess* of the Blood upon the Death of *Arface's* Daughter is still more so, and then indeed if we allow the Two first Absurdities, the Third follows very naturally, and She may well be a *Queen*. It was this sort of jumbled inconsistencies that his Countryman *Boileau* shews his Indignation at, in the following Lines,

*I'd rather much the nauseous Dunce should
say
Downright, my Name is Hector in the Play,
Than with a Mass of Miracles, ill join'd,
Confound my Ears, but not instruct my
Mind.*

The Thought is a poor Imitation of the old Subject of *Comedy* among the *Athenians*, the Discovery of an exposed *Daughter*, but without the Plea of that Custom to make

make it verisimilar. But the Consequence of these Absurdities leads the Author into a larger Field of *Romance*, which is the reciprocal Passion of *Cæsar*, and *Porcia*. This is all a *Scene of Blind-Man's buff*, *I don't know my Love, and I do know my Love*. The Supposition of *Cæsar's* coming to *Parthia* *intognito* is of a Piece with the other Parts of the Fiction, his sudden Love and his Proposals upon that Subject are ridiculous and entirely out of Character, as we shall prove when we come to examine the particular Sentiments of the Actors in this Tragedy. But as yet we have not done with *Porcia*: *What a surprise, says Monsieur de Champ, must it needs be to Cato to see any of his Off-spring with a Diadem?* And the Critick in the *Parallel* says this is *marvellous, interesting, and grand*. It is indeed a *Surprise* to every Body as well as *Cato* to find his Daughter in such Circumstances, such a *Surprise* as renders the very Notion of the thing incredible. This kind of *surprise* is admirably exposed in the *Rehearsal*, when *Prince Prettyman* after Four bombast Lines upon his Mistress's Beauty falls asleep upon the Stage. The Passage is very diverting.

Prettyman. But I am so surpris'd with Sleep, I cannot speak the rest. (Sleeps.)

Bayes.

Bayes. Does not that *surprise* you, to fall a-sleep in the nick? His Spirits exhale with the heat of his Passion, and swoop falls he a-sleep as you see. Now here She must make a Simile.

Smith. Where's the Necessity of that Mr. *Bayes*?

Bayes. Because She's *surpris'd*; that's a general Rule, you must ever make a Simile when you are surpris'd; 'tis the new way of Writing.

The same Author has given us a Definition of this *surprise*, he says; 'Tis *Fighting, Loving, Sleeping, Rhiming, Dying, Dancing, Singing, Crying, and every thing, but Thinking and Sense.* Now, as Mr. *Bayes* introduces his *surprises* for the sake of a *Simile*, our French Author does it for the sake of a *glitt'ring false Thought*, and then he thinks he has made amends for his first Offence. As in this very instance, upon the Discovery that *Arsenia*, is his Daughter *Cato* says.

*What must my own Blood too incur my Hate,
A Foe to Kings, yet Father to a Queen,
Gods! do you justifie the Crimes of Cæsar?*

C

Now

Now I would fain know, why *Cato* must needs have an inbred Hatred to *Monarchy* in general, or why he should bully the Gods in his Appeal to them, upon an occasion which rather ought to lead him to thanking them. *Cato* bred up in a Commonwealth, and a fast Friend to the Laws of it, might well be supposed averse to a Tyranny in *Rome*; but it is ridiculous to make that Aversion extend to the Government of a single Person in all other Countries. And then the last Line is a Rant entirely unbecoming the Gravity of his Character. Our *Shakespear* has excellently hit this Thought in his *Julius Cesar*, but then he has wisely confined it to the proper Scene of Action, as when *Cassius* says to *Brutus*;

O! You and I have heard our Fathers say,
There was a Brutus once that would have
brook'd
Th' Eternal Devil to keep his State in Rome
As easily as a King.

How absurd had this fine Sentiment of *Shakespear* been if it had been drawn, (as my Lord *Roscommon* expresses it) to French *Wire*? and *Cassius* had said that there was a *Brutus* once, who would have hunted for Kings all over the World, and destroy'd them

them wherever they held their State. Beside, it is contradictory to Cato's Character, even as *Monsieur de Champs* has drawn it, for he is a Friend to King *Pharnaces* till he finds he is a Villain, and in Alliance with *Arsenia* while he supposes her a real Queen. What a heap of Blunders and Nonsense is here! only to bring in a fine Speech, built upon a false Foundation, and yet I don't question but this Passage has met with its Admirers.

But to the other Parts, and I chuse to take them from *Monsieur de Champs*, rather than the *Parallel-writer* because he has only added *admirable, fine, excellent*, and such general Flatteries to what the Author has said of his own Contrivance. He says in his Preface; *that Caesar, overjoy'd at the Happiness of Portia's declaring in his Favour, makes a Tender to her of the Empire, together with his Hand. This Proposal indicates the Design he had to enslave the Romans, and he would never have discovered it to any but a Queen, from whose Love and Maxims he had grounds to expect inviolable Secrecy.* This, indeed, was a fine time of day to reveal such a Secret, the whole World was apprised long before of *Caesar's* Design, every Boy in *Rome*, and every Slave in their Provinces could not but know his Intention to change

their Form of Government, and set himself up at the Head of it. *Cæsar* had flung off the Masque after the defeat of *Pompey*, and all the wise Men say into his Views even before that Time. And now, this grand Design is whispered to *Arsenia* in the third Act, and the whole turn of the Play depends upon a Thing the Audience must have anticipated at the very mention of the Name of *Cæsar*. This is a new Art of making Things known a long time after they are known, and this, as *Mr. Bays* says, is for the better carrying on of the Plot. *Mr. Addison*, on the contrary, supposes the Design of *Cæsar* to be well known from the beginning of the Action, and all that is said upon it, thro' the whole Play, is only to make his Tyranny more odious, and the Virtue of *Cato* more Conspicuous. Whenever the least Pretence is offered in favour of *Cæsar's* Views, *Cato*, from a just Judgment of the Temper of the Man, and the Chain of his Actions, condemns and exposes all such vain Surmises. As in that incomparable Line,

Cæsar asham'd! Has he not seen Pharsalia?

Which single Line is worth the whole *French Tragedy*, and may make us properly appeal with my Lord *Roscommon* to the Sense of all Mankind in these Lines,

—Who

—Who did ever in *French* Authors see
The comprehensive *English* Energy?

I shall only slightly run over the rest of the *Characters* in the *French*; *Pharnaces* is a Name but little known to a common Audience, and therefore very unaptly join'd in the same Piece with *Cato*, and *Cesar*, the supposition of his being designed for the Husband of *Arsenia*, and all that he does upon his Disappointment is a wild Romance, without following the least Track of historical Probability. The other Parts are pitiful Suppliments to the main Action, which this Critick has called the *Episodes*. But whatever Boasts he makes of the Constitution of the *French Fable*, I think it is plainly proved already, that it wants all that can render it *probable*, and *affecting*. His Objections to the *English* Tragedy come next in our way, and I assure you, Sir, they are such as become the Panegyrist of *Monsieur de Champs*, for it is certain that he who praises a bad Thing, can never relish a good one.

I believe, Sir, that our Author, when he wrote this Parallel, had borrowed an *English Cato* of some small Retailer of Coffee-house Criticism, who had mark'd one or two Passages in Mr. *Addison's*, which
he

he had found generally commended, and passed over the numerous Beauties which strike upon Men of better Sense, and less Talk. The late Lord *Dorset*, it is said, used to double down the the Leaves of the New-books he had which pleas'd him most, and it so fell out that a Pretender to Wit usually had the Opportunity of reviewing those his admir'd Passages when his Lordship was abroad, upon the Credit of which he passed good a while for a good Judge, and an able Critick. This great Man being informed of his Friend's Practice resolved upon a Method of putting his Judgment to a Trial, and accordingly doubled down abundance of Leaves in a very dull Book. The Retailer reads it, starts to the Coffee-house and swells into Raptures in admiration of a Piece that was generally condemned; but being oppos'd in his Extasies, and convinced that he was in the wrong, he cried out in a Passion, That *my L—d D—t had betrayed him out of Spite, and Dogs-ear'd the Book in the wrong Places.* I apply this Story no further, that that it seems probable that the Writer took those Parts of Mr. *Addison's* Play which he commends upon Credit, not upon any Judgment of his own, for though they are very Beautiful in their proper Places, yet any one of the least Taste could not have stop'd his

his Hand at a single Passage or two of that incomparable *Tragedy*. All the fine Sentiments of *Liberty*, the Effects of *Tyranny* and *Ambition*, and the noble Passion and Love for ones Country, which reign through the whole, are passed over in Silence. Sure Signs that the Play was *Dog-ear'd* for his Use.

Observe, Sir, with what an Air he accuses Mr. *Addison's* Conduct; The Loves of *Marcus* and *Portia*, of *Juba* and *Sempronius* are *Episodes* that destroy the Unity, and make it three *Tragedies* in one. Whereas in this Management there is the most beautiful and probable Simplicity that can be imagined, the under Parts being artfully connected to the main Story, and of a Piece with the whole. For it is easy to imagine a few Noble Romans, the two Sons and the Daughter of *Cato*, and a *Nu- midian Prince* following the Fortunes of that great Man, and interspersing some Concern for themselves and their own Success in Love amidst a Scene otherwise full of Misfortunes, and Calamities. On the contrary, the *French Writer* has picked up a King in one Country, and a Queen in another, and so jumbled them together that they are neither King nor Queen, he has embarrass'd *Cato's* Character with unnatural Ornaments, and sent him out of the

the World without preparing the Spectators for so signal a *Catastophe*. In short, *Cato* is lost and overshadowed in the Confusion of the other Characters, and the Play might more justly be called *Arsenia of Parthia*, than *Cato of Utica*.

Permit me, Sir, to give you what I think a just Idea of our English *Cato*, which will easily let you into the meanness of the *French*. *Cato* is drawn, as he really was, a Lover of Liberty and of his Country, inflexibly good, and brave, adorned with Virtues that set him above his Misfortunes, strike an awe into his Foes, and give an Example to his Friends and Followers. He is an avowed Enemy to *Cesar*, but it is to *Cesar* as a Tyrant, a Usurper, the Enemy of his Country, the Foe to Liberty and the Cause of Justice. Not a Word unbecoming the great Idea we conceive of *Cato* from the Antients falls from his Mouth, and *Rome* is always uppermost in the Thoughts. He can condescend to no Terms but such as secure the Liberties of his Country, he does not parly, cajole, and play false Rhetoric on *Cesar*, but all he says, is nervous, passionate, affecting, and full of the true Roman Spirit. Even when his Friends mention *Cesar's* Virtues, how does he return upon them!

Curse

Curse on his Virtues, they've undone his
Country.

In short, *Cato*, the great Character in the Tragedy, is always uniform and the same, and as he is the Center of all the Hopes of his Friends, and the sole Object of the Conspirator's Villany, every Incident tends only to illustrate and raise his Character higher.

But *Cato* in the *French* is vastly unlike the *Roman*, that is, the *English Cato*. *Cato* is there the Friend and Protector of a King and Queen, and yet an Enemy to *Monarchy*, he is fullen in one Act, and supplicates in the next, he speaks of *Cæsar* with Contempt, and soon after talks of him to his Face with a Boyish Eloquence. What can be more insipid than to hear him say,

“ *Let the exulting Romans sing your Praise,*
“ *Let them repeat aloud, Cæsar's a Heroe,*
“ *Cæsar subdu'd the World and then himself.*

This is the boasted Scene in the *French*, the *Critick* says, “ The Interview between those great Men, as *Monsieur de Champs* has manag'd it, gave such satisfaction to the Audience, that the most merciless Criticks have not dar'd to oppose it. I

D

“ need

“ need not transcribe it: Your Lordship
 “ has read it over, and over, and thou-
 “ sands of People have it by Heart. Now
 I declare that I have a tolerable Share of
 Compassion for *Monsieur de Champs*, and
 yet I can’t help condemning this Scene,
 and I have a great deal the worse Opini-
 on of his *Lordship’s* Judgment for read-
 ing it over so often; as for the *Thousands*
 that repeat it *Tom Durfey* shall out-do
 him, for he has his *ten Thousands*. If the
 Poet had any Judgment he should never
 have brought them together, unless he
 could have made them speak better, and
 more like themselves. It is a good Rule,

— — — — — *Quæ*
Desperat tractata nitescere posse, relinquat.

Who can hear *Cato*, with any Patience,
 say?

*Had we the Pow’r to chuse a King, perhaps,
 None might so well deserve the Crown as
 Cæsar.*

And this is all to make *Cæsar* appear
 great, but sure it ill becomes the Mouth
 of *Cato* to flatter him so; but the Poet
 is to get off by that Beautiful, *perhaps*,
 so judiciously brought in at the end of the
 Verse. I think now here is Occasion for
 the

the mildest Critick in the World to open his Mouth, if to make People talk out of Character be any ground for a Critick's speaking. Heaven preserve the Memory of the Thousands that got this by Heart for the Persecution of English Travellers!

Look upon *Cato* under the same Circumstances in the Embassy of *Decius*,

Dec. "A Stile like this becomes a Conqueror."

Cato. "*Decius*, a Stile like this becomes a Roman."

Dec. "What is a Roman, that is *Cæsar*'s Foe?"

Cato. "Greater than *Cæsar*: He's a Friend to Virtue."

And then how does he paint the Tyrant out at parting, and how like himself conclude!

— By the Gods I swear, Millions of Worlds
Should never buy me to be like that *Cæsar*.

All the while I read Mr. *Addison* I see *Cato*, he answers the Image I have formed to my self of him from the Draughts of his Character in the best *Latin Authors*; but I don't know who speaks in the *French*, sometimes I take him for a

Philosopher, sometimes for a Pedant, he is a Heroe, and a Knight-errant in the compass of two Pages, and as for his Daughter, *Arsenia* is far the better *Cato* in Petticoats.

Give me leave to transcribe an Objection or two more from the *Parallel*, and I could tell the Writer where he stole them too, but they are so pitiful that it is no matter who is the Owner of them. "The
 " two first Acts and half the Third consists of Love-scenes, impertinent to the
 " Subject, Moral Discourses between *Cato's*
 " two Sons, and *Juba*, and *Syphax*, and
 " lastly, a flat Debate among the Senators. Alas! here's one half of *Cato* condemned at once, and the Play chopped in two in the middle by the unmerciful Hand of our Critick, and truly I wonder his Cruelty did not extend to the other Parts. Well, but I will venture to say that this dead-doing Son of the Muses has only flourished his Flail in the Air, without doing any manner of hurt to honest *Cato*.

For the first Act opens the whole View of the Play, it gives us *Cato* and *Cesar's* Pictures in the opposite Lights as they then stood; the Conspiracy of *Sempronius* begins to work in the second Scene, the Love-scenes are a proper Part of the Action, and

and help on the main Design, and the Discourse between *Syphax* and *Juba* is formed with the nicest Art to corrupt the Morals of that young Prince, and make the Conspiracy more general and effectual. And farther, the Debate among the Senators is just, and proper, and moving, while it keeps up to the strictness of *Cato's* Character, who would not stir in the Cause of his Country, 'till he had observed the known Maxim of the Republick in applying first to the *Senate*. But I find that the *Critick* has mentioned the Impertinence of the Love-scenes more than once, and the under Dealers in Wit and Poetry retail this Objection in all their learned Disputes. I shall therefore shew the Justness and Propriety of them in particular, and humbly hope that my Observations will not seem the less true because they are drawn from Nature it self.

Marcus and *Porcius* are both in love with *Lucia*, *Juba* with *Marcia*, their Passions are supposed to have commenced long before they were driven to *Utica* with *Cato*; here they all lie under a general Cloud of Calamity, which threatens and approaches nearer to them every Minute. In these Circumstances what could be more natural to brave and gallant Spirits than to endeavour to find out the Fate of their Passions, when their Lives lie at Stake, that such a determination might inspire them to tread beyond the common lengths

lengths of Soldiers, in the Cause of their Country, and of Love? A Time of Danger ever makes the Lover think of the Object of his Passion, and when that Object is near, every Minute that his Duty can spare is consecrated by the brave Mind to the Success of his Love. This is so natural, that we find it a common Practice with Men of a serious turn of Mind to write to their Ladies at the approach of a Battle, wherein they are to hazard their Lives. 'Tis true that *Cato* reprehends *Juba* for talking of his Passion for his Daughter at a time of such Extremity, but tho' it became *Cato* to blame him, it as much became *Juba* to love. Both Actions are natural alike, a grave Man could no more help his Rebuke, than a Lover could his Passion. And I hope this will be a sufficient answer, tho' a great deal more might be said to this Objection.

I will not tire you, Sir, with any more of this Critick's Impertinence, but only desire you to observe how differently the Catastrophe is turned in these two Plays. *Cato*, in Mr. Addison's, makes the most solemn Preparation for Death imaginable, as a Philosopher he reasons himself out of the Fears of it by a future Prospect, as to a Roman he despises Life at the Hand of a Tyrant, and yet he pauses, doubts and struggles under the uncertainty of an un-enlightned Mind, and Principles, that could be but merely conjectural. This is to
make

make *Cato* die like *Cato*, to make Reason get the better of natural Infirmities, Liberty of Slavery, Death attended with the Hopes of a better Existence, preferable to a certain Misery in Life.

In the *French* the Truce between *Cæsar* and *Cato* is broke without any Pretence to Reason, an Action entirely abhorrent to a *Roman* Spirit; so true is this Author to himself, all his *Romans* being alike, that is, no *Romans* at all. The Action which follows this Violation of the Truce the Poet lays hold on to send *Cato* out of the World; he kills himself in the heat of the Battle with the same Pride as *Ovid* makes stupid *Ajax* do upon the loss of *Achilles's* Armour.

Ne quisquam Ajacem, posset superare nisi Ajax;

The same Childishness *Cato* observes in his Conduct, and dies because *Cæsar* should not boast

Of Cato's Death, or Cato's Preservation.

I should now, Sir, run thro' Mr. *Addison's* Play, and give you some Reason why it excels not only all the *French* Plays that I have seen, but even those of our own Country-men. But I must defer this to another Opportunity, when I intend to refute all the Criticisms of this *Parallel-writer*, and those of some other malignant Spirits, who cannot bear to praise any thing which exceeds their own Powers to perform. The *French* Critick, to do him Justice,

Justice, I believe, judged his best, and told all he knew of the Matter, more to display his Vanity than his Ill-nature. But our *English* ones, who envy their Country the Honour of *Cato*, are actuated by a different Spirit, they come with a malicious Resolution of making Faults, where there are none, and a Pride obstinate enough to condemn Beauties, which they cannot but see, and taste. For my own Part I think it easier to forgive a Writer any Fault, than a Design of corrupting our Judgments, or debauching our Principles. And for this Reason it is, that in a short time I intend to publish in a more universal Language, a Vindication of Mr. *Addison's Cato*, and I shall think my self very weak, if I am not able not only to answer the Objections of those Criticks, but to prove the Perfection of that incomparable *Tragedy*.



F I N I S.